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UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

STATEMENT BY SENATOR J. W. FULBRIGHT
SALT ONE YEAR LATER

Mr. President, a little more than a year ago, the President signed in Moscow a treaty limiting ABM deployments and an interim agreement limiting offensive strategic arms. Much public discussion and extensive Senate debate occurred in the weeks and months following the signing of those accords. A number of concerns were expressed over the wisdom and risks of that initiative toward the control of the strategic arms race. At the conclusion of that discussion, the Senate overwhelmingly approved the ABM treaty and the Congress agreed to the interim agreement limiting strategic arms.

We might now recall some of the arguments that were made in the course of the debate on the Senate floor and consider the current state of the arms race -- a little more than a year after the signing of the accords.

In the course of the floor debate, the junior Senator from Washington warned the Senate that the Soviet leadership had a number of large missiles and might be developing a still larger type of missile.¹ He cited the possibility of a tremendous yield of as much as 50 megatons per missile.²

The Senator from Washington observed that the United States deliberately has not sought the ability to strike first against hardened missile sites of the Soviet Union, adding, "That is the difference, and that is what is disturbing about the huge Soviet missiles and the still larger missiles they are now developing."³

A day earlier, last September 6, the Senator had said, "the Soviets have an advantage in missile throw weight that, while already very large, is subject to still larger increases. As things now stand, the overall Soviet transcontinental missile throw weight is approximately four times our own."⁴

To further illustrate his view of Soviet advantage, the Senator in the same statement turned to the subject of ABM: "We had four sites authorized, we cut back and agreed to two in the ABM treaty -- which in effect was really one, and the Soviets did no cutting back."⁵

The Senator's remarks were disturbing to a number of people interested in the strategic situation. Some were alarmed at the prospect of an agreement which allowed such a visible manifestation of nuclear power -- the large Soviet missile force -- to be made still more terrible in the wake of an agreement. I believed then that it would be better if the Soviet Union were to refrain

1 Congressional Record, September 7, 1972, p. S14282.

2 Congressional Record, June 1, 1972, p. S8661.

3 Congressional Record, September 7, 1972, p. S14282.

4 Congressional Record, September 6, 1972, p. S14182.

5 Ibid., p. S14181.

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from the emplacement of larger weapons in substantial numbers. But I was convinced then, as I am now, that with the mutual ability each side possesses to destroy the other many times over -- an ability reinforced by the ABM treaty -- each side has a viable deterrent and knows that the other side could not hope to start a nuclear war without the certainty of suffering catastrophic losses. I remain convinced of that, although I also believe that, for purposes of reassurance, both sides should exercise restraint in nuclear weapons development, so as to prevent recurrent alarms and also so as to release funds on both sides for constructive social purposes.

At the time of the debate last year, Senator Jackson seemed interested in the benefits of restraint, especially on the part of the Soviet Union, and he indicated that demonstrated restraint might be a sound basis for both sides to turn their attentions to domestic priorities.

In this connection the Senator said, on September 6 last year, that if the Soviets dismantled the SS-7 and SS-8 IBMs and thus brought their ICBM throw weight down, "This would be a move in the direction of fairness. And it would be a move in the direction of exploring the arms build-up by beginning to narrow the now considerable disparity between the larger Soviet force and our own smaller one."⁶ The Senator added, "Perhaps they can be persuaded to refrain from deploying bigger missiles in the first place. Surely such a result would increase our security and enable us both to forego new strategic programs and make it possible for both countries to have more funds available for important domestic programs."⁷

In light of the Senator's expressed views, I urge him to join me and other Senators in finding out just what has happened since last year. And if it should then be established that the Soviets have in fact shown the restraint the Senator from Washington urged upon them, I would hope that the Senate would then act to change priorities in the way the Senator suggested should be possible.

Since the Senate approved the ABM treaty and the two Houses gave their assent to the signing of the interim agreement, our negotiators have moved well into the SALT II negotiations with the Russian delegation. There are indications that there soon may be tangible progress beyond last year's agreement.

Our experts have had an opportunity since the approval of the agreement to use national means of verification -- a use guaranteed in both the treaty and the agreement -- to see whether the Soviet Union appears to be living up to the spirit and the letter of that agreement.

I am aware that it is very difficult to know precisely what the Soviet Union is doing with its strategic programs. Much depends upon calculations and assessments based on largely

⁶ Ibid., p. S14182.

⁷ Ibid.

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subjective judgments. The same was true last year when we approved the ABM treaty and interim agreement. Allowing that these judgments must still lack certainty, I would like to know the answers to several important questions which arose in the course of our discussion last year:

What in fact happened to those big, terrifying, new Soviet missiles that were seen on the horizon -- those missiles that were supposed to be substantially larger than the huge SS-9 missile?

What ever happened to those huge new holes mentioned in press accounts which were supposed to presage deployment of a new generation of still larger missiles?

What ever happened to the tremendous Soviet throw weight advantage mentioned last year? Is the Soviet megatonnage now increasing or declining? Is the megatonnage disparity between the two sides growing or being reduced? Much of the megatonnage in the Soviet force was centered in the approximately 200-missile SS-7 and SS-8 fleet. What happened to that fleet? Are there indications that the Russians will soon be retiring that fleet?

We know what has happened to our ABM plans. The Congress has sensibly rejected the idea of spending billions of dollars on that dubious enterprise. But what about the Soviet Union? They, like us, are limited to two sites. When the treaty was signed last year, the Soviets had only 64 ABM interceptors deployed and only a single complex. Are there more than 64 missiles now? Have any steps been taken to begin the allowed second complex?

If those who were disturbed last year were to consider the answers to these questions, they might now find themselves reassured as to the intention of the Soviet Union to live up to the terms of the treaty and the agreement. They might find themselves willing to take a new look at the importance of achieving further agreement in SALT and in related fields, such as the long-delayed comprehensive test ban. They might also see the wisdom of restraint now on our part, which would serve to demonstrate our good intent and prevent needless deployments, while allowing the release of money for urgent domestic purposes.

It seems to me that all the members of this body could join in a thorough reappraisal of defense spending in view of what we know now of Soviet intentions. Certainly our deteriorating monetary situation should provide added incentive for this re-evaluation.

The Defense Department shows no sign of letting up in its strategic spending. Congress is being asked to appropriate more than three-fourths of a billion dollars this year for continued procurement of Minuteman III and Minuteman force modification. The executive branch hopes to spend about one-half billion dollars during FY 1974 to convert our Polaris submarines to Poseidon. Beyond that, nearly another one-half billion dollars is being asked to continue the development of a new strategic bomber, the B-1. And \$1.7 billion is being sought for the development, procurement and military construction cost of Trident ballistic missiles submarines and Trident missiles. In addition, several hundred million dollars are being spent on other strategic programs.

I look to others in this body more versed in the specific programs than I to inform the Senate as to the relative merits or demerits of these strategic programs. If, however, the Russians are living up to the letter and spirit of last year's agreement, it seems to me that that fact should weigh heavily in the setting of our national priorities.